



DATE: December 6, 2004

TO: Oklahoma Conservation Partnership  
NRCS Employees

SUBJECT: Monthly Activities Report

The following report of current activities is provided for your information.

**PROGRAMS (Reported by Kevin Norton)**

**Conservation Security Program (CSP)**

Three Oklahoma watersheds were among 202 across the nation invited to participate in a historic new program designed to reward farmers for long-term stewardship. The Secretary of Agriculture, Ann M. Veneman, announced the selected watersheds in early November and said sign-ups for the 2005 CSP would begin this winter.

The CSP, part of the 2002 Farm Bill, was introduced last summer in 18 watersheds nationwide. The Lower Salt Fork of the Arkansas River Watershed, in northern Oklahoma, was one of those 18 selected. In this first opportunity for farmers from each state to participate, about one eighth of the Nation's eligible farmers will be given the chance to apply each year over an eight-year period. A state map showing the locations of the selected watersheds is attached.

The three Oklahoma watersheds selected for 2005 are:

Lower Cimarron-Skeleton Watershed which lies solely within Oklahoma in the wheatbelt region of the state. It covers 2,076,047 acres, 3,780 farms, eight counties, and 10 conservation districts. Major agriculture enterprises include, hard red winter wheat production, livestock grazing on native range, introduced forages and small grains, and localized areas of dairy and swine production.

Lower Neosho Watershed which lies in northeastern Oklahoma with 95% of the watershed in Oklahoma and 5% in Arkansas. It covers 1,330,860 acres, 3,967 farms, seven counties and seven conservation districts. Major agriculture enterprises include, livestock grazing of introduced forages and native range. Poultry production is concentrated in the Spavinaw Creek tributary to the watershed, and swine and dairy production are localized within areas of the watershed in both Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Little River Watershed which lies in central Oklahoma, is entirely within the state. It covers 626,141 acres, 1,998 farms, four counties, and five conservation districts. Major agriculture enterprises include, livestock grazing and hay production on native range, introduced forages, and some small grains.

The CSP represents a whole new direction in conservation and agricultural policy and programs. These payments for demonstrable long-term stewardship will reward many of those who undertook conservation on their own initiative and who care for the resources we all share. Participants will be enrolled in one of three tiers in the program, depending on the extent of the conservation treatment in place on their farm or ranch. Payments will be based in part on this existing conservation treatment, as well as their willingness to undertake additional environmental enhancements.

While protecting soil and water quality are the "price of admission", farmers will also have options to improve wildlife habitat, air quality, participate in watershed-wide stewardship programs, and improve

nutrient and pest management activities.

The NRCS will offer local workshops in the selected watersheds to more fully explain the program to interested potential participants.

The CSP will continue to be offered each year, on a rotational basis, in as many watersheds as funding allows. Refer to the Oklahoma NRCS website at [www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov) for additional information on CSP in Oklahoma; or information including the Federal Register notices, public comments, and frequently asked questions.

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

The EQIP allocations, distributing ≈\$19 million in financial assistance, were issued to field offices by bulletin and in ProTracts in November. A copy of the table listing the allocations is provided for information. Field offices are conducting outreach activities, finalizing the application evaluation criteria, and evaluating applications. Application selections and developing contracts for obligation of the funds will begin after January 1, 2005. Offices are being asked to finalize obligations of this initial allocation by May 1, 2005. Available unobligated balances will be accumulated and reallocated in early May to ensure all EQIP funding for Oklahoma is obligated.

In addition to the county level allocations, four statewide initiatives are being offered through the EQIP in 2005. Applications offered for these critical resource issues are accepted on a continuous basis and will be evaluated and ranked for approval in four separate statewide evaluation pools. Applications received in field offices by close of business on January 15, 2005, will be considered for funding in the initial application ranking pool. Specific information regarding the resource description, evaluation criteria, and eligible practices may be accessed on the Oklahoma NRCS website at:

<http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/htmlfiles/eqipindex.html>

#### **Statewide AFO/CAFO Resource Concern Criteria**

Several concerns raised by dairy, beef, and swine operators scattered across the state that EQIP funds were not being made available because too few AFO/CAFO operations are present in the community to be significant to the locally led process. The State Technical Committee requested a statewide process to address the water quality impacts of these operations to the rivers and streams of the state. As a result, a statewide application and funding process was added to fiscal year 2004 EQIP to address this concern. This pool will be continued for 2005.

An allocation of \$450,000 has been set aside to fund animal waste management applications statewide. These funds will be available only to existing and expanding beef, dairy, or swine confined feeding operations. A lower priority will be given to operations that are planning expansion beyond current levels or capacity, and all applications for new facilities and poultry operations are ineligible for evaluation under the Statewide AFO/CAFO Resource Concern Criteria.

#### **Statewide Irrigation Water Conservation Concern**

The 2002 Farm Bill included a specific section in the EQIP providing for specific funding for groundwater and surface water conservation (GSWC) measures. In 2002, the allocation was nationally targeted to the High Plains region of the United States, which includes Oklahoma's three panhandle counties and parts of five other counties. Due to the limited allocation, the significance of the Ogallala aquifer, concentration of irrigation practices, and the backlog of applications, the targeting of the funding was continued in 2003 and 2004. Oklahoma's 2005 allocation in the GSWC funding of EQIP (\$752,899) remains insufficient to address the resource needs and application backlog in the three panhandle counties.

The State Technical Committee recommended offering ground and surface water conservation funding statewide to provide other irrigators an opportunity for cost-share assistance to increase system efficiency and provide for water savings. Therefore, a the limited statewide application and funding process (exclusive of the three panhandle counties) initiated in the fiscal year 2004 EQIP to address the Statewide Irrigation Water Conservation Concern will be continued in 2005. The water conservation and irrigation eligibility requirements of EQIP are as follows:

- The land must have been irrigated two (2) of the five (5) years previous to application for EQIP.
- Conservation measures applied through the EQIP must result in a net water savings to the operating unit.

### Statewide Manure Transfer Resource Concern

Potential environmental concerns relative to the management of animal wastes in Oklahoma's Nutrient Limited Waters (NLW) and Scenic River watersheds continues to be a high priority for the State Technical Committee. As a result, a new Statewide Manure Transfer Resource Concern developed in the EQIP for implementation in FY 2004 is being continued for 2005.

The project has two primary objectives:

1. Create an incentive to distribute animal manure to areas of the state that have historically not used animal manure as a fertilizer.
2. Promotion of a long-term market for animal manure as a fertilizer around the state.

Implementation of this project has the potential to reduce animal manure application in areas where it has traditionally been over-applied in the past and should result in better distribution of these nutrients statewide.

Financial assistance available to the participants in the statewide Manure Transfer Resource Concerns will be limited to incentive payments, for up to three years, for Manure Transfer (634) and Nutrient Management (590) conservation practices as listed in the current EQIP Cost-List. No other practices will be available under this resource concern.

### Lagoon Closures Animal Resource Concern

This allocation was set-aside beginning in 2003 to assist in the closure of livestock waste treatment lagoons and livestock waste storage ponds, where confined animal production operations were discontinued voluntarily, involuntarily, or by termination of an industry contract statewide. Applications are evaluated, ranked by a multi-disciplinary team, and selected for funding at the state level.

Cost-share is limited to the components necessary to complete the closure under the Oklahoma Closure of Waste Impoundments (360) practice standard. This practice provides closure of waste impoundments (treatment lagoons, waste storage ponds, under barn storage pits, and other associated waste facilities) that are no longer used for their intended purpose, in an environmentally safe manner. Closure of these facilities will follow an official closure plan developed by the NRCS, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry (ODAFF), or an approved Technical Service Provider.

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

Oklahoma NRCS received a WHIP allocation of \$678,018 for fiscal year 2005, significantly less than the previous fiscal year. The WHIP provides cost-share and technical assistance for development and/or improvement of wildlife habitat on private lands. Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) technicians and biologists will continue to evaluate and rank eligible applications and will provide technical support for contract implementation upon contract approval for WHIP according to the updated contribution agreement between the two agencies.

All privately-owned rural lands are eligible for participation in the WHIP. Applicants must have their farm records established and an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) certification in place with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In addition, the applicant must be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetlands conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985.

Applications will be taken on a continuous sign-up basis and high priority applications, based on specific statewide ranking criteria, will be selected for funding from a statewide pool. Local NRCS field offices will begin accepting applications immediately and previous applications will be continued for consideration if the applicant desires. Only applications received by January 1, 2005, will be ranked and considered during this initial application ranking and selection period. Applications after that date will continue to be evaluated and maintained for possible future funding as workload permits. Successful applicants will be notified after February 15, 2005, for eventual contract development until the available funds are obligated. All successful applicants will be required to develop, implement, and maintain a Wildlife Habitat Development Plan (WHDP) during their individual WHIP contract period.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (Reported by Les Conner and HR staff)**

**Personnel Actions – See attached**

## **EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (Reported by Becka Redding)**

Thanks to a tremendous effort by NRCS employees and our conservation district partners, Oklahoma has once again captured the number 1 spot for Earth Team Volunteer hours, with 89,832. We were also the fourth highest in the number of volunteers, with 2,571.

The new reporting system is online and functioning. Staff will begin to input hours online for FY05. This will eliminate both mid-year and annual reports, since national Earth Team staff can run all reports as needed. This new system is very user-friendly, and training will be provided to those offices who wish to enter their own hours. District employees who wish to input hours can also do so, but must receive access in order to get a login and password. Any interested in this should contact Becka Redding at the state office for guidance.

## **ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES (Reported by Randy Freeland)**

No report available.

## **ENGINEERING (Reported by Johnny Green)**

### **Design/Construction Status**

	<b>In Progress This Time Period</b>	<b>Completed This Time Period</b>
<b>Detail Survey</b>	Cottonwood 54, Logan Co. Sallisaw Creek 15, Adair Co. Sallisaw Creek 16, Adair Co. Sugar Creek (Devil's Canyon Drop), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Gracemont Drop), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Control), Caddo Co. Sugar Creek (Priority Reach 1), Caddo Co.	
<b>Geologic Reports</b>		Barnitz Creek 13, Dewey Co. Barnitz Creek 14, Dewey Co. Sallisaw Creek 32, Sequoyah Co. Sallisaw Creek 33, Sequoyah Co. Sallisaw Creek 34, Sequoyah Co.
<b>Soil Mechanics Analysis/Reports</b>	Barnitz Creek 13, Dewey Co. Barnitz Creek 14, Dewey Co. Lower Bayou 12, Love Co. Mill Creek 18, Johnston Co. Upper Blue River 36, Pontotoc Co.	Stillwater 33C, Payne Co.
<b>Design</b>	Barnitz Creek 13, Dewey Co. Barnitz Creek 14, Dewey Co. Bitter Creek 18, Grady Co. Boggy Creek 31 (repair), Washita Co. Cobb Creek 2, Washita Co. Double Creek 3, Washington Co. Mill Creek 18, Johnston Co. Oak Creek 4 (repair), Washita Co. Sandstone Creek 1, Roger Mills Co. Sandstone Creek 13, Roger Mills Co. Sandstone Creek 16A, Roger Mills Co. Stillwater 33C, Payne Co. Sugar Creek (Devil's Canyon Drop), Caddo Co. Turkey Creek 9, Washita Co. Upper Red Rock 52, Noble Co. Cavalry Creek 12 (repair), Washita Co.	
	<i>Continued on next page</i>	

	<b>In Progress This Time Period</b>	<b>Completed This Time Period</b>
<b>Check Prints &amp; Field Reviews</b>	Oak Creek 4 (repair), Washita Co. Boggy Creek 31 (repair), Washita Co. Sandstone 16A, Roger Mills Co.	
<b>Solicitation For Bids</b>	Cavalry Creek 6, Washita Co. Sugar Creek (Binger Bridge), Caddo Co.	
<b>Site Showing</b>	Sugar Creek (Binger Bridge), Caddo Co.	
<b>Construction</b>	Double Creek 5, Washington Co. Lower Clear Boggy 32B, Atoka Co. Sugar Creek 3 (repair); Caddo Co.	

### **OFFICE OF OUTREACH/CIVIL RIGHTS (Reported by Jasper Parker)**

The Office of O/CR participated in the planning and sponsoring of the Women in Agriculture (WIA) meeting in Seminole on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The meeting included Seminole, Pottawatomie, Pontotoc, and Hughes counties. Over 100 individuals attended the meeting. We are working with three additional WIA Planning Committees to host meeting/conference in the near future. We met with the WIA planning Committees in Tonkawa on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Purcell on November 17<sup>th</sup>, and Anadarko on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The ASTC and staff set up a display table at all of the OACD Area Meetings in November to share informational materials with those present.

Jasper Parker attended the USDA Outreach Council meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, held at the Choctaw Nation Complex in Durant. Approximately 35 individuals were in attendance. The ASTC also met with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) to finalize preparations for 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Tribal Soil and Water Conservation Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, December 7 – 10, 2004. The OTCAC is hosting the meeting jointly with the Indian Nations Conservation Alliance.

The NRCS state office worked with Langston University and the The Oklahoma Landowners and Tenants Association (TOLTA) to sponsor an education tour of the Noble Foundation, for underserved farmers and ranchers. This tour was conducted on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> and centered on incorporating cool season grasses into grazing operations. The NRCS also provided sponsorship for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Farmers Conference, hosted by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) on November 20<sup>th</sup>. The NRCS provided a display and presentation on NRCS and Farm Bill Programs at the conference. Over 200 individuals participated in the conference.

The NRCS participated in Career Days at Wilson Elementary School on November 20<sup>th</sup> and Agriculture Career Days at the Wes Watkins Technology Center in Hughes County on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **OPERATIONS (Reported by Gary O'Neill)**

As of November 28, 2004, Gary O'Neill has assumed the position of Assistant State Conservationist for Operations. Future reports for Operations will be submitted by Mr. O'Neill.

### **RC&D (Reported by Larry Wright)**

#### **Tallgrass**

The Tallgrass RC&D Council had their annual banquet for 2004 at Bartlesville on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The Council had a new record number of NRCS Earth Team Volunteer hours for FY 2004, nearly 2,200 hours. The Council is currently working on plans to have a Statewide Oklahoma Sampler in the spring of 2006. The sampler will be a festival which will promote communities. The Council is continuing to work on a new web site.

### **Wheatland**

The Wheatland RC&D Council worked with the Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes on planning for five miles of windbreaks at the entrance to the Tribal headquarters. The Council finalized the plans for an Agribusiness Seminar that was held December 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm at the Pioneer Technology Center in Ponca City. Topics will include: farm safety, pond management, water quality issues, well-head protection, and the Blue Thumb program.

Wheatland RC&D Council held its Annual Meeting, November 4<sup>th</sup>, in the Cherokee Strip Conference Center with 123 individuals in attendance.

### **Ouachita Mountains**

The Ouachita Mountains RC&D Council is conducting planning meetings for a Small Farms Workshop to be held at Idabel. Partners include the Idabel Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Committee, Langston University, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Little River Conservation District, NRCS, and RC&D.

The Coordinator attended the OACD Area V meeting and served as a judge for the speech contest. Mr. Garman also gave a brief presentation on the Women in Agriculture and Small Business Conference held at Beavers Bend in September.

### **Cherokee Hills**

The Cherokee Hills RC&D Council has supported and facilitated the Tenkiller Utilities Authority project for the past ten years. The Council received an engineering report and cost estimate at their last monthly meeting. Based upon this information, the Authority decided unanimously to seek funding from USDA-Rural Development and proceed with Phase I construction of the project. Phase I will include 14 of the participating rural water districts and associations along with the City of Tahlequah. The project had to be redesigned due to the City of Sallisaw withdrawing from participation in the project and Sequoyah County Water Association reducing their original stated need. The US Corps of Engineers also reported that they possibly have a new funding source to assist in funding a portion of the project.

The poultry waste processing project, i.e. Stamper Project, is moving along, just slightly behind schedule.

### **Great Plains**

The Great Plains RC&D Council continues to conduct monthly strategic planning workshops for the Southern Plains Agricultural Resources Coalition (SPARC). The next meeting will be December 15<sup>th</sup> and will include planning for the organizational structure. Dr. Phil Kenkel, recognized expert on cooperatives, will lead the discussion.

The Great Plains RC&D will begin the organization of a planning committee for a state wide Women in Agriculture Conference. The first meeting is scheduled on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

The RC&D Coordinator served as a judge at the recent OACD Area IV meeting in Weatherford.

*(Several coordinators were on leave and did not submit a report this month for November.)*

### **SOILS/GIS (Reported by Jim Ford)**

Soils Section is conducting work to generate new County Prime Farmland Lists and Land Evaluations: In the early 1980's, SCS (Soil Conservation Service) created land evaluations for 54 counties in Oklahoma as part of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of July 5, 1984. The agricultural land evaluation system (LE) is determined by soil characteristics, capabilities, and productivity. The LE is used to determine the relative value of agricultural groups that reflect agricultural viability.

The previous land evaluation documents are out of date and need to be revised to current standards. In order to develop current land evaluations for each county, soil scientists will review soil databases to find and populate the missing data needed to generate a new Prime Farmland List for each county. Once the database population is completed, the criteria will be run through software called "CALES" (Computer Assisted Land Evaluation System) to determine new soil groupings for LE. The new Prime Farmland Lists, along with other data needed to complete Prime Farmland Determinations, will be posted to the

electronic Field Office Technical Guide. This effort will make Prime Farmland determinations and completing the AD-1006 Forms more user-friendly and will reflect current conditions.

Resource Soil Scientist Position: The vacant Resource Soil Scientist Position at the McAlester Technical Service Office is being advertised. Hopefully, this position will be filled as soon as possible to provide support to offices in southeast Oklahoma.

## **WATER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (Reported by Bill Porter)**

### **EWP Update**

The three contracts listed below are progressing.

<b>County</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>COR</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Garvin #3	Dec 2000 Ice Storm	5081	Charlie Colvin	Under Contract
Washita	Jan 2002 Ice Storm	5085	George Townsley	Under Contract
Major	Oct 2002 Flooding	5094	Dean Cook	Under Contract

Oklahoma has received \$3.68 million in funding for most of its outstanding work. This will meet most of the funding needs for the state. Progress is being made on the first round of contracting for the newly funded projects.

Status of Oklahoma Watershed Rehabilitation Projects			
Watershed	Dam No.	County	Conservation District
<b><i>In Planning</i></b>			
Barnitz Creek	13	Dewey	Dewey County CD
Caney-Coon Creek	2M	Coal	Coal County CD
Cobb Creek	1	Washita	Deer Creek CD
Cobb Creek	2	Washita	Deer Creek CD
Dead Indian Creek	4	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sallisaw Creek	20	Adair	Adair County CD
Sallisaw Creek	32	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Sallisaw Creek	33	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Sallisaw Creek	34	Sequoyah	Sequoyah County CD
Turkey Creek	9	Washita	Washita County CD
<b><i>Planning Completed - Awaiting Design</i></b>			
Barnitz Creek	14	Dewey	Dewey County CD
<b><i>In Design</i></b>			
Mill Creek	18	Johnston	Johnston County CD
Sandstone Creek	16A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
<b><i>Planning &amp; Design Completed - Awaiting Construction</i></b>			
Cavalry Creek	6	Washita	Washita County CD
Double Creek	2	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	3	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	6	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Sandstone Creek	1	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sandstone Creek	13	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
<b><i>Under Construction</i></b>			
Double Creek	5	Washington	Caney Valley CD
<b><i>Rehabilitation Completed</i></b>			
Double Creek	1	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Double Creek	4	Washington	Caney Valley CD
Sandstone Creek	12	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sandstone Creek	17A	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sergeant Major Creek	1	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD
Sergeant Major Creek	2	Roger Mills	Upper Washita CD

## --ZONE NEWS--

### ZONE 1 (Reported by Jamey Wood)

#### TEAM 1

#### Texas County

The Guymon Field Office assisted Oklahoma Panhandle State University with their annual High School Scholastic Competition. Troy Collier and Chuck Stanley, Woodward TSO, assisted the field office staff



with setting up the land judging, rangeland judging and plant identification contests. The contest was held on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Due to inclement weather, only 52 students participated this year.

### Beaver County

The Beaver County Partnership hosted the annual poster and speech contests with over 500 participants submitting posters and seven speech contestants. Balko and Turpin students won 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Area I OACD poster contest in Enid. The Beaver County Local Workgroup and County Outreach Advisory Council met in November to approve conservation and outreach priorities and action plans for FY2005. In October, the NRCS staff participated in a Beaver County Career Day and presented programs on Effective Communication for parents and teachers in Beaver and Buffalo. They also are assisting local FFA students with a project to build wildlife guzzlers to NRCS specifications for land owners around the county. The partnership began working with Beaver Beyond on developing a walking trail and outdoor classroom. The DSR report was submitted for a EWP Project to repair the 6 Mile Bridge and Beaver was approved for \$90,000 in ECP assistance to repair terraces damaged by July rains. Albert "Sonny" Hodges, a long time cooperator with the Beaver County Conservation District was awarded the Range Stewardship Award by the Oklahoma Section of the Society for Range Management for his efforts in prescribed grazing and wildlife management.



### TEAM 2

The Women in Agriculture meeting was held on October 29<sup>th</sup> in Alva at the Northwest Technology Center with 38 presenters and attendees. Topics ranged from understanding the legislative process, value-

added products from traditional crops, learning what government agencies can do for producers, and learning how to start a local farmer's market.

### **Woods County**

A grazinglands seminar was held November 5<sup>th</sup> in Alva for area producers. Approximately 40 participants attended the meeting. Keynote speakers were Daren Redfearn, OSU and Steve Glasgow, NRCS. Several producers visited with the group regarding their grazing operations and about what has worked and not worked. Very good discussions were held and knowledge shared.

### **Dewey County**

The Oklahoma Red Cedar Association Annual Convention meeting was hosted by the High Plains RC&D. The tour was hosted by Taloga NRCS, Oklahoma Commissioners of School Land, Dewey County Conservation District, and Dewey County OSU Extension Service

The seminar and tour provided outreach, educational resources, and potential business opportunities for producers statewide that are interested in utilizing Eastern Redcedar. The meeting was held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> with 57 attendees and presenters.



### **TEAM 3**

Team 3 held a team meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Autry Career Tech in Enid.

## **ZONE 2 ( Reported by Mark Habiger)**

### **Team 5**

James Dixon entered on duty as the District Conservationist in the Dewey field office on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Much appreciation and gratitude go to Julie Blasi for her excellent efforts as “acting DC” since June. Ms. Blasi has assumed her new position in the Vinita field office as the soil conservationist.

### **Team 6**

The Adair County Conservation District conducted their “Three R’s Conference earlier this month. The meeting covered rules, reports, and regulations involving the poultry industry. The meeting was well attended and featured speakers from NRCS, OSU Extension Service, and representatives from state agencies. The meeting was co-sponsored by Cherokee Nation, OSU Extension, NRCS, Tyson Foods, and Mrs. Smith’s Bakeries.

Adair, Cherokee, and Sequoyah counties have been working to organize a Women in Agriculture Conference in northeastern Oklahoma. Staff members from the respective field offices and conservation districts have been meeting to hammer out details and develop an agenda. The meeting is scheduled to be held this winter.

## **ZONE 3 (Reported by Lanny Miller)**

The Jefferson County Conservation District (JCCD) awarded Sam Countiss the Cooperator of the year in Jefferson County. The Waurika Farmer and Rancher owns and operates land from Waurika to Terral. He demonstrates a conservation ethic on all his land. He is also an asset to his community by donating his time and effort to causes throughout the county.

The JCCD sponsored three speech contestants from the county at the AREA IV OACD meeting. Contestants participating were Leah Dickey, Ashlee Goodwin, and Robert Smith. Staff attending the meeting were Jane Benton, JCCD Secretary and Clint Norton, NRCS.

Kaleb Pool has been selected to begin his career as a Soil Conservationist with NRCS and will begin his duties December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Waurika FO.

Norman FO has moved into a new location. The office is located at 2424 Springer Drive, Suite 105B. The Norman staff is excited about the move and invites those who haven’t seen the new space to come by for a tour.

The Pauls Valley NRCS staff has been busy with tours and meetings. Staff members attended a meeting on the MOA between NRCS and Langston University, AREA II OACD meeting in Stillwater, and a Farm tour sponsored by the Noble Foundation.

The RUSLE2 training has been completed in Team 9 with training of the stragglers Clint Norton, Joy Martin, and John Rolewicz. Training was provided by Resource Specialist, Steve Chessmore, November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Pauls Valley FO.

All the offices are reporting that EQIP ranking and finishing the SCSP are the top priority and are anxious for drier weather in order to check out plan practices.





*Participants and Ag instructor for the Stephens County Conservation District Speech Contest. Fifteen participants from Central High, Bray, and Comanche schools participated. The District had 42 posters entered in the poster contest from area elementary schools: Empire, Horace Mann, Duncan, and Comanche.*



*In cooperation with our partners, Stephens County Conservation District, Stephens County Livestock Growers Assoc., and OSU extension, the Duncan FO assistance with a county pasture/plant ID contest for the livestock producers and interested public. The tour took place on October 28, 2004 with 32 in attendance. Earl Weisner is discussing native grass and grazing management.*



*Area IV OACD Poster contest winners Stephens County, representing Empire, Comanche, and Duncan schools.*

### **Team 7**

All offices have been busy with ProTracts contract reconciliation and are complete with the exception of a few problem contracts. Payments and modifications are being processed that were delayed due to the reconciliation process. All offices have held Locally Led meetings and Local Workgroup meetings to develop ranking criteria and have submitted them for approval. Deferred applications are being re-ranked and new applications are being serviced. Conservation districts completed Annual Inspections of Watersheds.

#### *Special Activities:*

Deer Creek Conservation District will hold their annual Open House on December 14<sup>th</sup> to highlight conservation activities and recognize individual accomplishments in conservation.

*Cheyenne:* Laurie Boerngen, Range Management Specialist, and the OSU Extension Office have organized and started the Master Cattleman Program in Roger Mills and Beckham counties. The objectives of the Master Cattleman program is to enhance the profitability of beef operations and the quality of beef producers by equipping them with the vital information on all aspects of beef production, business planning, risk management, and marketing. To be certified as a Master Cattleman, producers must complete a minimum of 28 hours of instruction from the Master Cattleman curriculum. Instructions will continue through February 16, 2005.

### **ZONE 4 (Reported by Roylene Rides at the Door)**

#### **Staff**

Larry Hook has been hired at Holdenville as the Soil Conservationist through the Career Internship Program (CIP). Soil Conservationists are vacant in the Zone at Wilburton and Shawnee. The Resource Specialist (Program Liaison) in McAlester is also vacant. This position is currently being advertised.

#### **Farm Bill**

At this time, \$3.9 million dollars have been allocated to Zone 4 in EQIP funding. Field offices are currently working on ranking applications and developing conservation plans. Funding has to be obligated by May 1, 2005.

#### **Office Duties**

Offices are working on reconciling EQIP contracts in the ProTracts computer system. The zone is 80% complete. This task has to be completed before payments can be made.

### **Team 11**

Two new soil conservationists have been assigned to our team. They are Brian Ringels at Atoka FO and Abrehum Hester at the Tishomingo FO.

All offices in team 11 conducted a local work group meeting to discuss conservation issues relating to programs. News articles have been sent to local newspapers addressing the programs available and application sign-ups and cut off dates for ranking applications.

The DC's and Soil Conservationists attended their respective Area OACD meetings in November. The Marietta FO and Madill FO conducted an outreach meeting to discuss programs with the Love/Marshall Cattlemen's Association. There were 47 people in attendance.

Watershed O&M inspections and tours are being completed in all offices this month. Work is progressing between the rains on the watershed LCB Site 32B in Atoka County.

Seven member of Team 11 attended the two-day Prescribed Burning course on November 15 - 16 at Ardmore. The training included NRCS personnel, members of the Arbuckle Restoration Association and

local fire departments. The course discussed procedures, techniques, safety, policy, and laws required to conduct a prescribed burn.

### **Team 12**

The Hugo Field Office and NRCS, Tribal Resource Conservationist for the Choctaw Nation, Ann Colyer, provided an opportunity for Team 12 members to attend a prescribed burning workshop on November 9 and 10. The first day was spent in the classroom and the second day attendees went to the field on a Choctaw Nation tract of land and actually planned a prescribed burn that will be implemented this winter. Harry Fritzler, NRCS Range Resource Specialist, was the instructor and fire boss for the workshop. There were a total of seven participants with three of those from the Choctaw Nation.

The Haskell County Conservation District, with assistance from the Stigler NRCS staff conducted their 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bankers Award Program on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Conservation Bankers Awards were presented to four producers. Winners of OACD youth poster, speech, and essay contests were also presented awards. Virginia Kidd was the recipient of the Governor's Conservation Award, with Mike Thralls making the presentation. Entertainment was provided by Les Gilliam, The Oklahoma Balladeer. There were 145 in attendance at the banquet.

The Haskell, Latimer, and LeFlore Counties and Talihina Conservation District have completed orders for their Annual Tree Sales. About 2,000 pine and 2,160 hardwood tree seedlings have been ordered for cooperators.

A Fire Safety Training session was offered to Team 12 members by the Wilburton NRCS office, the Latimer County Conservation District, and Nicole Norris, OCC Water Quality Education Coordinator. The Wilburton Fire Department demonstrated the use of various Fire Extinguishers and presented a video of Fire Safety Methods and Techniques.

Latimer County Blue Thumb activities included monitoring at Bandy Creek, Robbers Cave State Park, Center Point, and at Black Loop and looking at a future monitoring site near Hodgens. There were 26 Earth Team Volunteers involved in the monitoring activities.

Team 12 was well represented at the OACD Area V Annual Meeting held at the McAlester Expo Complex on November 18<sup>th</sup>. During the concurrent sessions, Nicole Norris, Lake Wister Education Coordinator, made a presentation on Working to Improve Water Quality. Kenneth Risenhoover, DC, Poteau, Ann Colyer, Choctaw Nation, TRC, and Curt Elke, DC, Hugo, made presentations on Reaching Out to New Customers; and Jim Green, DC, Idabel, and Kenneth Risenhoover made presentations about Nutrient Management and EQIP.

### **Team Meetings**

Zone 4 will not have team meetings in December. An Award ceremony to recognize the hard work of individuals in Zone 4 was held on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Both NRCS and conservation district employees were invited.

If you have questions, or wish to discuss anything further, please let me know.

Respectfully,



M. Darrel Dominick  
State Conservationist

	<b>Personnel Actions</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Duty Location</b>	<b>Effect. Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>New Hire</b>	Koch, Saska D.	OA Clerk, GS-04	Clinton TSO	11/28/04	New Hire
	Kraft, Lisa A.	CS/G&A Spclst, GS-11	Stillwater SO	11/15/04	New Hire
	Hood, Larry R.	SC, GS-07	Holdenville FO	1/9/05	New CIP Selection
	McVeigh, Jami B.	SC, GS-07	Cordell FO	12/12/04	New CIP Selection
	Pool, Kaleb A.	SC, GS-07	Waurika FO	12/12/04	New CIP Selection
<b>Promotion</b>	Newton, Jared S.	SCT, GS-06	Muskogee FO	10/31/04	Career Ladder Prom.
	Morley, Tyson G.	SS GS-09	Woodward TSO	1/9/05	Career Ladder Prom
	Marek, Ronnie J.	SCT, GS-06	Woodward	11/14/04	Career Ladder Prom
	Miller, Lanny R.	ASTC (FO), GS-13	Stillwater SO	11/28/04	Promotion
	O'Neill, Gary L.	ASTC (O), GS-13	Stillwater SO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Meyer, Bruce E.	SCT, GS-05	Guymon FO	11/14/04	Career Ladder Prom
	Martin, Tyson J.	SCT, GS-06	Sallisaw FO	11/14/04	Career Ladder Prom
	Wilson, James R.	SCT, GS-06	Hollis FO	11/28/04	Career Ladder Prom
	Friend, Erik N.	DC, GS-12	Vinita FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Daniels, Eric W.	DC, GS-12	Jay FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Stinchcomb, Jr., Joe E.	DC, GS-12	Chandler FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Ward, Matthew A.	DC, GS-12	Pawhuska FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Zweiacker, Loran L.	DC, GS-12	Pawnee FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Allen, Gregory C.	DC, GS-12	Cheyenne FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Rathbun, Eddie	DC, GS-12	Chickasha FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Dotson, Robert D.	DC, GS-12	Cherokee FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Clark, Paul D.	DC, GS-12	Taloga FO	11/28/04	Promotion
	Oliphant, Shelly D.	DC t, GS-12	Alva FO	11/28/04	Promotion
<b>Reassign- ment</b>	Shaw, Rodney C.	DC, GS-12	Oklahoma City FO	11/28/04	Reassignment
	Ellis, James D.	SCT, GS-07	Stillwater FO	12/26/04	Reassignment
<b>State to State Transfer</b>	Perry, Diana L.	Ag Engineer, GS-11	Perry TSO	11/28/04	Transfer to Hawaii
	Hickman, Darren W.	Env. Eng, GS-12	Stillwater SO	10/31/04	Transfer to Texas
	Haberer, John F.	RSS, GS-12	McAlester TSO	10/31/04	Transfer to Texas
<b>Change to Lower Grade</b>	Dotson, Robert D.	DC, GS-11	Cherokee FO	10/24/04	From Promotion NTE 10/24/2004
<b>Transfer to OCIO</b>	Walker, Lou Ann	CS, GS-12	Stillwater	11/28/04	
	Boone, Tracie D.	CS, GS-11	Stillwater	11/28/04	
	Lawless, Tammy G.	CS, GS-09	Antlers	11/28/04	
	Corbin, Wanelda I.	CS, GS-09	Clinton	11/28/04	

OA Clerk– Office Automation Clerk;

CS/G&A Spclst – Contract Specialist/Grants & Agreements Specialist;

SC – Soil Conservationist;

SCT - Soil Conservation Technician;

SS - Soil Scientist;

ASTC (FO) & ASTC (O) - Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations) & (Operations)

RSS - Resource Soil Scientist; CS – Computer Specialist